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SPIRITUAL SURGERY

BY

OLIVER HUCKEL, S.T.D.

AUTHOR OF "MENTAL MEDICINE"

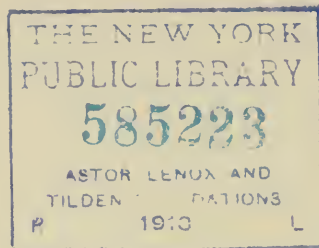
"If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;—
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;—
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not,— if morning skies,
Books and my food and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain;—
Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take,
And stab my spirit broad awake!"

From The Celestial Surgeon, by
R. L. STEVENSON

NEW YORK

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PUBLISHERS



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PREFATORY WORD

MANY of us love those fine old classics,—Sir Thomas Browne's "Religio Medici" and Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy." There is an exquisite flavor of learning and reverence in them. William Ernest Henley's group of poems, "In a Hospital," written from his experiences in the old Infirmary at Edinburgh while a patient at the same time with Robert Louis Stevenson, is also full of vivid suggestion concerning the literary as well as the spiritual value of a surgeon's work. If these present addresses to medical students can be at all suggestive to them or to others, along these same large and vital religious lines, their purpose will have been accomplished.

We confess to a certain cordial liking and tenderness of heart toward physicians. It may be on account of the genial nature with

which they are so often endowed; or the kind of work and life which is theirs; or it may be due to the kindly humanity and broad tolerance which has usually characterized them. We remember with gratitude such wise physicians and philosophers as the genial doctor, Oliver Wendell Holmes, who to some of us was once a personal friend and adviser; such an one as Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, whose work in literary lines has delighted our hearts; of the good Edinburgh physician, Dr. John Brown, who wrote those inimitable sketches of "Rab and His Friends"; of that quaintly heroic story of Dr. "Weelum" MacLure in Ian Maclaren's "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush"; of such an one as Dr. Luke of the Labrador, whose story is the life history, in a measure, of the splendid work of Dr. Grenfell.

Physicians have undoubtedly helped to put a kindlier spirit into humanity. They have been large factors in our growing civilization through the centuries, and their investigations and discoveries have furnished some brilliant chapters in the history of the achievements of humanity.

They ought to be deeply religious men, and many of them are sincerely spiritual. The physician is one who lives face to face with suffering and death. He sees humanity at its most pathetic moments; and he also beholds it at its most sublime crises, both of heroic endurance and of triumphant conquest, for with a sense of victory many a soul goes into the unseen. The physician is often called to follow departing souls to the very edge of the unseen and unknown, and he is thus perpetually reminded of the shortness of this life and of the great world beyond.

The physician is also constantly face to face with the miracle of life,—with the marvel of new life, which is being born into the world, and especially with the wonder of healing life, which is constantly performing veritable marvels in the human frame. One cannot live in this atmosphere of perpetual miracle if he has eyes to see, without looking through Nature to Nature's God.

Nor can the physician escape the significant fact, if he is a thinking man, of the large part that religion—right religion—plays in the health of the world. The Divine Master

is often called the Divine Physician, for he heals both body and soul. According to all reliable tradition, the evangelist Luke was a physician. These things may remind us at least of the spiritual side of every physician's work, and of the wonderful effects that faith and prayer, and hope and love, may have on the health and balance of the lives of men and women.

We are more or less familiar with the intimate relations between soul and body, and the interaction of one on the other. This has been somewhat recognized since the days of Jesus. It was known in a measure through the ages; but in these more recent days a new study of the mutual reactions has been made in the so-called Immanuel Movement, which directed attention anew to the great and outstanding fact.

The Immanuel Movement has had its day. Much of its distinctive work has been discontinued, but something true and helpful yet remains as a residuum of value. For instance, the fundamental truth is assured that the soul reacts on the body and the body on the soul.

Both must be kept in health for perfect sanity, mental and spiritual. Oftentimes physical disease cannot be fully understood, nor conquered, unless the spiritual factors in the history of the case are taken into account. For man is more than an animal. He is a spiritual being. His body is more complicated and intricate in its workings because of his soul. Religion, faith, hope, prayer, are therefore fundamental things in health and disease. That mystic word from the ancient Scripture is true. There is "a balm in Gilead; there is a Great Physician there." There is divine as well as human help in sickness. With a voice of infinite kindness the Supreme Power speaks to each. He seems to stand with hands outstretched as in that colossal statue of Thorwaldsen's that towers in the corridor of the Johns Hopkins Hospital,—representing the Supreme Physician Himself,—seeming to speak His words of gracious invitation, not only to all the sick and suffering patients of the world, but even to the physicians themselves: "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek, and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

O. H.

BALTIMORE,
June 1, 1912.

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THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

CHAPTER I

THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

THE art of surgery is as old as human needs. The first surgery was probably of the crudest kind. It meant the staunching of blood, the extraction of arrows, the binding up of wounds, the supporting of broken limbs by splints. But necessity is the mother of invention and among primitive men certain individuals became skilled in this primitive art of surgery.

The oldest accounts of what may be called systematic surgery are perhaps those given in the sacred books of the East,—the Sanskrit books called the Susrata, written by the physician-priests of the Brahmins. These indicate that the first systematic surgery was practiced by ministers of religion. These books probably date about 500 B.C. They describe one hundred surgical instruments, made of steel,—instruments sharp enough to divide a

hair, kept perfectly clean and wrapped when not in use in flannel in wooden boxes. They had lancets, forceps, metal mirrors, and other appliances. They used fourteen varieties of bandages.

The Egyptian priests, as well as the Brahmins, were also surgeons. On ancient Egyptian tombs there are many carvings representing patients carefully bandaged or undergoing operations at the hands of surgeons. The operation for cataract was performed in those old Egyptian days, and mummies have been found with well-set fractures, and some ancient Egyptian mouths were well supplied with artificial teeth.

It would be most interesting to know how much such a physician as St. Luke the Evangelist knew about medicine and surgery. He was doubtless educated at Alexandria, which was at that time the centre of culture and learning. We may know approximately, for we have the contemporary writings of Greek physicians at Alexandria, which give in detail what was known in both medicine and surgery by the well-educated physicians of that day and city. These writings of the physi-

cians of St. Luke's day have a most modern sound. They show that the work of the physician of that era was not made up of superstition and medicines of useless nostrums, as might be imagined, but that already medical practice was based on excellent traditions, the result of wide observation and experience, and the careful study of generations of learned men among Greeks, Egyptians, Arabians, and other nations of the East. It is a revelation to those who go carefully into the history of medicine and surgery to find how much the ancients really knew, and to learn that much of our modern progress is but a building on the foundations that were laid a thousand, or two or three thousand, years ago. It reminds us that all work that is enduring is the progressive product of the centuries.

Nevertheless it is true that the past hundred years have seen both in medicine and surgery, but especially in surgery, more wonderful advances than in the whole thousand years preceding. This is largely due to certain great discoveries of which we shall speak more fully in succeeding chapters, such discoveries as that of anesthesia and the possibilities of

the antiseptic treatment. These have made possible vast fields of operation and helpfulness undreamed of until our own generation.

Sometimes when we look back over the centuries and call to mind the great men of the past, there come to remembrance most easily the figures of the great warriors of the ages. Such men as Alexander the Great, Philip of Macedon, Julius Cæsar and Alaric the Goth, Charles Martel, the "hammer of Europe," Gustavus Adolphus, Napoleon Bonaparte, Oliver Cromwell. These men stood out on the pages of history as the great leaders of mankind and the arbiters of the destinies of nations. But around this great procession of the heroes of the sword I see scattered the mangled, wasted bodies and the whitening bones of thousands and tens of thousands of victims slain to make their victories. These mighty conquerors march forward amid the smoke of destruction, and mingled with the martial music are the shrieks of agony and the moan of multitudes of desolated homes.

I believe that the time has come when we ought more fully to give our tribute of admiration to other heroes of the human race,—

to those who have conquered, not by the slaying of men, but by the healing and the saving of life. We ought to know more fully and to honor these heroes who have worked, not for the destruction of human life, but whose sole aim has been the preservation of it.

These preservers of human life are a glorious company as they come marching down the ages. On all sides are the plaudits of the innumerable multitude whom they have saved, and the music that accompanies them is the thanksgivings from unnumbered millions over the whole earth who have benefited by their healing work.

I say it is good for us to recall these great names of the heroes of peace in medical and surgical annals and to hold them in grateful remembrance and to offer to them our tribute of praise. We cannot mention them all. The list of these worthy workers is too long. But look at the record of a few of these heroes of peaceful service and of devoted work for the human race.

Out of the mists of the past comes the great figure of Hippocrates, called "the father of medicine." He was born 470 years before

Christ, in Greece, in the island of Kos. Hippocrates was a real man, not a myth, however mythical may be the life of Æsculapius, another early name to conjure with. Hippocrates wrote much on the subject of medicine and surgery, and some of his books may still be read. The oath that was called the Hippocratic oath is full of the dignity and honorable aims of the medical profession. Tradition says that he lived to be nearly a hundred years old, and that all his life long he was an indefatigable student. He was one of the first scientific scholars in medicine, and a most revered practitioner and teacher among the Greeks.

The long list of famous Greek physicians also numbered among them Galen, born more than 500 years after Hippocrates and 131 years after the coming of Christ. He was one who revered Hippocrates and followed in his steps. He practiced both in Greece and Rome, and traveled through all the world which was known at that time. He was the first great physiologist, discovering the true function of the arteries and teaching laboratory methods. The nervous system was also his favorite

field of investigation, and many of his writings which are still extant have a distinctly modern sound.

Another great surgeon was born to the world in Andreas Vesalius. He is one of the chief figures of the sixteenth century. He saw the light in Brussels in 1514. He came from a line of physicians and learned men. He built upon the work of Hippocrates and Galen. He studied at Louvain and Paris. Then he went to Italy and was given the chair of surgery in the University of Padua. Medical authorities agree that the work that he published on surgery shows him to be one of the earliest masters of the scientific method.

The great work was still further carried on by Ambroise Paré, the French surgeon. His life began as a humble barber-surgeon, and ended as the greatest surgical authority in Europe, and the best beloved man in France. He was the first of the great modern clinical surgeons, as Vesalius has been reckoned the first of the modern scientists. He wrote in dedicating his great book to the king: "God is my witness and men are not ignorant of it,

that I have labored more than forty years to throw light on the art of surgery and bring it to perfection."

Time would fail us to tell of the great work of Borelli, Malpighi, Paracelsus, Van Helmont, and of Harvey, who was the demonstrator of the circulation of the blood; nor can we stop to dwell upon the work of Albrecht Van Heller, the marvelous surgical professor of Berne University and of Göttingen. Scotland has given two great surgeons, John Hunter who dominated the 18th century and Joseph Lister whose splendid work has marked and honored the 19th century. As one has said: "John Hunter was the first and greatest English-speaking exponent of proper scientific research. He is the father of all modern physicians, surgeons, laboratory students, for he wrought mightily in all these fields." And Sir Joseph Lister, another of these immortal Scotch surgeons, is the one who first made possible and practical the antiseptic treatment which has been among the epoch-making discoveries in modern surgery. Only as far back as 1869, when he was called to his professor's chair at Edinburgh, his theories were new and

unaccepted; but in twenty-five years he saw his principles adopted throughout the surgical world, and no man can reckon the immeasurable saving of life, the infinite relief of suffering, the opening of new fields of possible help, through his great work.

Our American surgeons have also kept up a noble tradition, and have done notable and original work. We ought thoroughly to realize and appreciate their splendid services. Such great names as John Jones of New York, William Shippen of Philadelphia, John Warren of Boston, are the earliest among the great surgeons. Philip Syng Physick, of Philadelphia, is called the father of American surgery. Such names as Morton, Gibson, Hayes Agnew, Samuel Gross and many others have added honor and glory to the annals of surgery; and in Baltimore there are a distinguished company whose work has been noteworthy and famous, not only in their own city, but also throughout the nation and the world.

Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore have become widely known for the skill of their surgeons. Their hospitals have made

those cities Meccas for the suffering from all parts of the country. The fame of their surgeons has gone abroad, and the worth of their hospitals is so thoroughly recognized that students from all parts of the country are making sacrifices to be under the instruction of these famous teachers and practitioners. Here in America we are sending forth a body of trained physicians and surgeons second to none in all the world. Summing up our thought on this point, we quote that thoroughly true remark of the Spanish scholar Señor Castelar :

“Hereafter the world will care more to know who first gave man light by the flint and steel, bringing him forth from the obscurity of his cave ; to know who first yoked the oxen to the plow, that the earth might give forth bread and wine ; to know who brought quinine from another hemisphere to our own, as a remedy for our fevers, than to know the warrior whose helmet, sword, and spurs show plainly that he is to be accounted among the conquerors, although he may be responsible for untold violence and be an enemy of humanity.”

Yes, we must more fully appreciate the fact of the great debt of gratitude we all owe to the physicians and surgeons of the centuries for their arduous and wonderful labors. True it is that the advance of medicine has also made possible the progress of surgery. Medical science in the recent centuries, and especially in the last one hundred years, has also attained greater precision in diagnosis, has gained more extended knowledge of physiology and of vital chemistry, and has discovered such therapeutic resources in anesthesia and antisepsis as has enlarged the whole sphere of both medical and surgical work.

But we come now to the further fact that there is other surgical work than that which deals with the physical frame. The founder of the so-called Christian Scientists, in her book "Science and Health" (edition of 1909), shrewdly advises her followers to leave surgery and the adjustment of broken bones and dislocations to the skill of a surgeon. She acknowledges that surgery is the last branch of healing to yield to the supremacy of mind. However, she naïvely admits the possibility in some far-off future of mental surgery and the

cure by mental action of broken bones, dislocated joints, and diseased spinal vertebræ. But she acknowledges that as yet mortal mind is not sufficiently advanced in science to contend effectually with breakages, dislocations, and other accidents. In this point, and for once, we fully agree with her. We all know that the mental attitude may have much to do with the general conditions of health and healing. In certain cases stimulated mental action may be capable of unusual results, even in organic disorders. But it would be a far stretch of the imagination to conceive of mental action setting broken bones or dislocated joints. What is needed in such cases is the skillful hands and intelligence of the trained surgeon. We are not called therefore at this time to consider mental surgery, but what may be aptly called spiritual surgery.

Now what, in contradistinction from a possible mental surgery, do we mean by spiritual surgery? May we not call it a spiritual application of surgical methods to spiritual problems? It is a divine analogy. Spiritual surgery is, in part, in the very language of the Gospel: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off,"

—and surely a deeper spiritual surgery than we can use was in the methods of the Master.

The greatest Physician and Surgeon in all the glorious annals of the world was one whom the world acknowledges as its greatest religious teacher and the Prince of Peace. Jesus was a marvelous physician and surgeon both in physical and spiritual ways. The operations that He performed were often in opening the eyes of the blind, in unstopping the deaf ears, and in restoring the lame and the maimed to the full use of their powers. He used in this work the divine and miraculous gifts which belong to Him as the divine Saviour. They are all a part of the miracle of His life. We read the accounts of His physical healing of the multitudes that came to Him; but the spiritual healing that He effected in so many lives was vastly more important. As the spirit is more important than the body, and as eternity is more important than time, so the healing of the sins of men had its consequences unto life everlasting. He Himself said: "Greater works than these shall ye do." This undoubtedly referred, not to His miracles of physical healing, but to the long-extended ar-

ray of spiritual triumphs of the Gospel in the inner lives of men.

The miracles of modern surgery suggest by analogy certain processes in the spiritual world which are going on to-day and are equally miraculous. The Great Physician, who lived among men two thousand years ago and did His wonderful work of healing among the cities and hillsides of Galilee, is also the Divine Surgeon to-day, and His work touches the most secret and vital parts of the human life. When, for instance, He says in His incisive way: "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; if thy hand offend thee, cut it off," surely He means something that we may well denominate by that term "divine surgery." He does not mean that we should literally pluck out the eye or cut off the hand, but that the spiritual process of ridding ourselves of temptation must be as rigorous and severe as if this work were physically done. The great object of Christ's teaching was by His words of stern warning and revealing insight to cut away the abnormal things in our lives; to break down the barriers which sin raises between us and divine things; to bring men back

to normal conditions so that divine grace could flow into and through the life.

Jesus used His divine gifts of insight in seeing the depths and the needs of human nature. He knew what was in man and He used His divine knowledge of the infinite healing power of God in this work of the Divine Surgeon.

When we come down to practical applications, spiritual surgery means that we are to rid the life of temptation; to cut out evil associations; to cut out the tendency to tamper with sin; to cut out all selfish indulgences; to cut out things which seem in some ways harmless, but which in the long run will fatally injure the life; to cut out all doubtful things from the life; to do this, even though the doing means severe sacrifice, and the severest pain, and a seemingly irremediable loss. Spiritual surgery means the cutting out of things noxious, as the Master commanded. The whole object of the work of the surgeon, after all, is to be, not the accomplisher of the healing process nor the doer of the whole work, but merely to be a helper in a great work which Nature itself does. The direct work of

the surgeon is to make, as far as possible, normal conditions for the healing and redemptive power of Nature to assert herself. His important work, which needs all the intelligence and skill possible, is the removal of abnormal growths, the cutting away of barriers or clogs to Nature's work, and the restoration of normal conditions in case of wounds or fractures.

The surgeon's work is never in itself the healing process; he has nothing to do with healing. Nature is the great healer, and the perpetual miracle. The awe-inspiring miracle that often accompanies the surgeon's knife is the marvelous way in which Nature rallies to retrieve the wrongs inflicted upon the human body by accident or disease.

We take for granted, therefore, that Nature will heal. When we look carefully and scientifically into the methods by which Nature in a human body repairs the wasted tissue, it is one of the most marvelous processes. All growth is a waste and a repair of tissues; but the way in which emergencies are met when a tissue is violently cut or wasted, how the whole system seems to rise up and send its

repair forces to that particular place, an army of ten thousand small but important workers, sent instantly to build up again the destroyed tissue, is one of the marvels of the world of life.

Spiritual surgery differs from ordinary surgery in the fact that we have a part to do in the process. We are not to lay ourselves unconsciously in the hands of the Divine Surgeon, but we ourselves are consciously, willingly, and resolutely to help Him in the work. It is "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The knife for the cutting out of sin and the eradication of all evil is to be the knife of the Lord and of our own wills.

Conscience is a knife of the Almighty, piercing to the very inmost of our being. Remorse is a knife of the Lord, cutting deep into the heart with its secret pains of bitter memory. Repentance is a knife of the Divine Surgeon, penetrating with its keen edge our complacency and pride, and bringing us down in weakness and humility to the feet of our Saviour. The determined will is veritably the keen edge of the knife.

But conscience cannot heal the soul, nor re-

morse, nor repentance, nor the will. These are only the keen-edged knives that cut deep. But as the great healing work in physical surgery was by that wonderful recuperative power of nature, when the courses of the life were made right for healing, so in the divine surgery the real work of healing is by divine grace,—the life taking hold of the healing power of God.

Repentance and faith and consecration to a new life constitute our part in the process, while God's part, which He is always eager and willing to perform, is the giving of His regenerative grace to create in us clean hearts and to renew right spirits within us.

We may also say that much of modern surgical work is still devoted to these same maladies which Jesus treated, and wonderful are the operations that are performed for the giving of sight to defective eyes, and for the giving of hearing to defective ears, and of restoring, either by the use of the knife or by some form of bloodless surgery, the use of crippled limbs. Spiritual surgery has also a large field in the same directions which Jesus touched. Many people have eyes, but they

see not,—their vision is blinded to all the higher values of life. Ears have they, but they hear not,—the noises of the world are continually with them, and these are all they hear. They are deaf to the still small voice of God. Many there are whose walk and conversation is lame, piteously lame,—their inner life seems crippled or deformed, either by inheritance or the accidents of life, or by their own perverseness and sin.

It is only the Celestial Surgeon, the great wonder-working Master, who can take away the blindness from these sightless eyes and can give them the power of hearing even the whispers of the divine love and can restore unto them the gift of walking as true children of the living God.

Some of you remember those lines of Robert Louis Stevenson under the caption of "The Celestial Surgeon":

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;—
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;—
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not,—if morning skies,

Books and my food and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain;—
Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take,
And stab my spirit broad awake!

Are there not many who are living commonplace and mean lives, even sinful lives, who need the Celestial Surgeon to cut them to the quick, to awaken them to the realization of the greater things of life?

Oftentimes men are callous to the things that they ought to do or to the life that they ought to live, and it needs the sharp cuttings of the Celestial Surgeon to effect new results. We wonder sometimes why certain calamities come, bitter disappointments, "the stings and arrows of outrageous fortune," the heavy siege of physical suffering. We question providence whether these things are not undeserved; but may not these very things be the keen and sharp strokes of the knife of the Celestial Surgeon wielded for spiritual help and health? It needs drastic treatment to arouse to better things. But the knife of the Celestial Surgeon is always kind.

There is a most heroic and unselfish side to the surgeon's work. He is constantly putting

his own life into jeopardy for the life of the patient. Even with the utmost precautions a slight scratch on the surgeon's hand, unnoticed at the time, may result in blood-poisoning and the surgeon's death. There are many records through the centuries, and in our own day and in our own city, of just such sacrifice in their unselfish labors. The Divine Physician gave his life for us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

THE ANATOMY OF THE SOUL

CHAPTER II

THE ANATOMY OF THE SOUL

COMMON parlance ascribes the term "anatomy" to the study of the structure of organisms, and especially that of the human body. The various phases, "descriptive anatomy, pathological anatomy, physiological anatomy, comparative anatomy," have their special provinces of dissection and examination. But the word "anatomy" also covers a much wider scope than the treatment and minute examination of the human body. Max Müller, the Oriental scholar, speaks of a "careful anatomy of the literature of India," meaning a critical examination and analysis of the subject. And one of the most famous books of all time is that wonderful volume called Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," which is a historical and philosophical treatise full of the rarest and quaintest information concerning the cause and the cure of the pessimistic mood in human lives.

The subject of the anatomy of the soul is therefore not an unwarranted one. The anatomy of the body is a most interesting and profitable study. But equally fascinating and richly suggestive may become the study of the anatomy of the soul, along somewhat different lines, and yet equally vital and important. The anatomy of the soul means a careful and painstaking examination of the nature and laws of the spiritual life, as manifested in that personal possession called the soul.

The subject of anatomy in its relations to the bodily structure is most interesting. That famous painting of Rembrandt's that hangs in the galleries at Amsterdam, called "The School of Anatomy," or sometimes "The Lesson in Anatomy," represents a group of surgeons of one of the great Dutch Universities of the Middle Ages, who stand watching the work of a colleague, in some particularly fascinating process of dissection. The grouping of the figures, the dignity of the costumes, the inimitable coloring of the great artist, make it wonderful as a painting; but there is a somber dignity in the subject itself. The living,

searching the dead, for the secrets of life. It is one of the great paintings. It helps to interpret the worth and the glory of the medical and surgical profession to the world.

Many a student may work carelessly in a dissecting-room, absorbed merely in the mechanical process, until suddenly deeper and larger thoughts dawn, and he begins to realize the miracle of the structure in which he is working. A dissecting-room in a medical college may not be an attractive place for the uninitiated. It reveals its meanings only to the professional. To any outsider who may wander into it, the place may seem like the contortions of a nightmare, or a chamber of horrors or a weird phantasmagoria, as one beholds that strange array of distorted, slashed, and mutilated bodies. It is enough to take the romance and poetry out of the much-lauded beauty of form and flesh. It may, however, be a salutary place for the occasional visit of the sentimental dreamer, for the tales that it tells are honest and unvarnished. It gives us the inevitable truth, that for all humanity come final death and pitiable decay. A dissecting-room may provoke dreams, but

they are intense and of a somber sort. One who goes and works there in the right spirit of study and investigation finds more than a curious interest in his work. I speak from student experience. He finds growing within him a wonderful fascination for the great revelations and matchless miracles which are revealed to him in the work. There is something so beautiful and yet awful in the structure of the bodily frame, such an undefinable mystery in the perfection and correlation of the various parts of the body, that one realizes anew the truth of the Psalmist's words, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made."

What a unique poem was that which was left years ago in the dissecting-room of the Royal College of Surgeons in London near a perfect human skeleton. It excited much attention at the time and many efforts were made to discover the author; but the writer, so far as I know, was never discovered. The poem is full of thought for those who work amid the wonders of human anatomy:

Behold this ruin! 'twas a skull,
Once of ethereal spirit full.
This narrow cell was life's retreat;
This space was thought's mysterious seat.

What beauteous visions filled this spot,
What dreams of pleasure long forgot!
Nor hope nor joy, nor love nor fear,
Has left one trace of record here.

Beneath this mouldering canopy
Once shone the bright and busy eye;
But start not at the dismal void,—
If social love that eye employed,
If with no lawless fire it gleamed,
But through the dews of kindness beamed,
That eye shall be forever bright
When stars and sun are sunk in night.

Within this hollow cavern hung
The ready, swift and tuneful tongue;
If falsehood's honey it disdained,
And when it could not praise, was chained;
If bold in virtue's cause it spoke,
Yet gentle discord never broke,—
This silent tongue shall plead for thee
When time unveils eternity.

Say, did these fingers delve the mine,
Or with the envied ruby shine?
To hew the rock or wear a gem,
Can little now avail to them;
But if the page of truth they sought,
Or comfort to the mourner brought,
These hands a richer meed shall claim
Than all that wait on wealth and fame.

Avails it whether bare or shod,
These feet the paths of duty trod?

If from the bowers of ease they fled,
To seek affliction's humble shed,
If grandeur's guilty bribe they spurned,
And home to virtue's cot returned,
These feet with angel wings shall vie,
And tread the palace of the sky.

How intimate is the relationship, as this poem suggests, between the anatomy of the body and the anatomy of the soul! And yet one is material, and the other ethereal. Ordinarily we think of one as real, and the other as intangible and elusive. But even on this question a decided change is coming over the mind of modern science, and the fact is being recognized that the spiritual is just as real as the material, although differently discerned. Certainly, a human body which perishes after seventy years of use, and dissolves into the dust, is no more real than the human soul which lasts through time into eternity. It is the things of the soul, after all, that are the permanent and eternal things. And therefore the study of the anatomy of the body, however interesting and important it is, is not nearly so vitally and eternally important as a study of the anatomy of the soul.

Now there are certain things which the study of anatomy reveals to us, which have not merely physical but spiritual meaning. In some cases the analogies are striking. The anatomy of the bony structure, its framework and articulation, suggest spiritually the value and importance of stamina in the soul. Sometimes we speak of "the backbone of a moral life." It means a life that has convictions, will-power, earnestness, determinations, strong and vital decisions. It means that which is permanent and fundamental in the life, and upon which the whole spiritual body of thought and action depends.

In the physical anatomy there are the nerves and the brain. In a spiritual way, these represent the spiritual intelligence of the life and the spiritual sensitiveness of the soul. We speak of moral nervelessness, and of the paralysis of spiritual effort. It is the direct analogy from the brain and the nerves.

There are also the muscles in the body. How wonderful is their power of action and reaction. These have their spiritual analogies in the various powers of the soul, its strength in doing the allotted tasks, its power of meeting

special emergencies and of carrying heavy burdens.

There are various internal organs of the body which have their spiritual analogies, clearly recognized, perchance because of the supposed relationship of these organs to spiritual moods. For the spleen and the liver seem oftentimes to give jaundiced or cynical views of life, while the healthy condition of the liver seems to react on a man's faith and happiness.

But most striking of all, the analogy to physical things is carried into the spiritual life in the analogies of the heart and its arteries. All through the Bible the heart is designated as the true seat of the spiritual life. The blood is often called the very life itself. Indeed, we cannot understand the vital and far-reaching significance of what is sometimes called the "blood-theology" of the Bible unless we interpret it by this physical analogy of the prime importance of pure, strong blood and the absolute necessity of right heart-action. The older dispensation which culminated in the greater dispensation of the Master made much of the significance of the blood, whereas we of these

modern days put the stress of our emphasis rather upon the life than the blood. But essentially the two meanings may be regarded as one. When it is said "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," it means exactly the same as "we are saved by His life." For "He came that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly." He Himself was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. His body is the Bread of Life; His Blood is the Wine of Life. His life is to take possession of our lives. His life is to become an integral part of our lives, until from the center to the circumference, from the inmost beating heart of our life out to the uttermost fringes of the veins and the arteries of our being, the life-currents of His saving grace are to thrill and throb within us.

SOME MIRACLES OF THE SURGEON'S
KNIFE

CHAPTER III

SOME MIRACLES OF THE SURGEON'S KNIFE

ONE who has gone down to the gates of death, through accident or disease, and has seemed to catch sight of the very doors of the shadow of death, and afterward has been rescued and snatched from the grave by the skillful work of the surgeon, will understand thoroughly what is meant by the great words in the drama of Job, "Have the gates of death been opened unto thee, or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?"

Perhaps it needs something of this experience to appreciate thoroughly the surgeon's work. For the surgeon is one who seems to say to death oftentimes when it is surging in upon life, what was said in olden days to the ocean: "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

A distinguished surgeon has recently called attention to the fact that while Calvin or Jonathan Edwards, if recalled to life, might discourse to-day interestingly of predestination and free-will, and great preachers such as Beecher or Spurgeon could stir our souls and warm our hearts as of old; while great jurists such as Justinian or Marshall could expound the same principles of law that hold good for all time, and great forensic orators like Burke or Webster could convince us by the same arguments that persuaded our fathers, yet so great and revolutionary has been the advance of surgical progress, that no great surgeon who lived a hundred years ago could teach surgical principles to-day or perform a modern surgical operation. Even the modern surgical terms and special vocabulary would be absolutely unintelligible to him.

But on the other hand it is equally interesting to remember that while a minister of religion might find himself an alien in many far-off foreign lands, and while an American lawyer, owing to the difference in precedents, could not plead a case in Italy or Russia, Hindustan or China, yet the surgeon's work is

equally applicable to all people the world over. The same accidents and diseases assail the people of the frozen North as those of the torrid equator, the swarthy African and the yellow Malay; and the new surgical help devised in Philadelphia or Baltimore is equally applicable to the Japanese or Egyptian. Equally true is it, as Dr. Samuel Chew, of Baltimore, said in a recent presidential address: "No period can be compared as to the number and importance of its achievements in medicine as a science studied or as an art practiced among men, within the past one hundred years. The medical science is so vastly in advance of what it was a century ago, both as to our methods of dealing with disease and in our conception in many cases of what disease is, that the difference is to be measured, not by years only, but by a complete revolution."

These modern days of surgery are marvelous. One who is most eminent in his own rôle of surgeon has borne explicit testimony to the progress of surgery and the extraordinary diminution of mortality, by showing that in many cases and many classes of serious diseases requiring surgical treatment, whereas

before there was mortality of considerably more than half, now it has been reduced to almost 'zero. He also shows in detail how abdominal surgery, which thirty or forty years ago was entirely forbidden ground, is now the constant field of operation with most wonderful results, both in relief to the patient and in pride of the surgeon. He gives in detail the facts in regard to head and brain surgery. Until ten or fifteen years ago the brain was the most dreaded organ in the body to be treated with the knife. Now most delicate and unique operations are performed, with comparative safety and fine results. Every part of the body and every organ of the body are now the field of the surgeon's work. It is also possible in these days to operate directly on the heart itself. It is a matter of rare occurrence, but it has been done and most successfully. It would seem almost as if the present sphere of the surgeon's work were unlimited.

Indeed, the miracles of the surgeon's work in these days are so numerous and so astonishing that any new development seems possible. The various ways in which separate

bodily organs can be operated upon without disturbing the functions of the other organs is a wonderful development; the process of the replacement of certain organs by those of other individuals or animals; the various operations for skin grafting and the transfusion of blood; the reconstruction of various defective features, the delicate operations on the eye, ear, and throat; so many, so intricate, and so wonderful are these various processes and the possibilities of healing and help, that the modern surgeon seems veritably a worker of miracles.

To the ancients these astonishing achievements would seem as actual miracles, and to us to-day they would also seem as miracles were it not for the fact of their frequency, and the knowledge that we have of their methods. Nevertheless they are miracles; they are exhibitions of such astounding skill and intimate knowledge of Nature's healing processes.

We do not appreciate all that this means until we have had some dear friend rescued from death by this miraculous work, or unless we ourselves by personal experience with the hospital and the surgeons have learned to un-

derstand something of the nature of the work.

The famous Dr. William W. Keen, of Philadelphia, has prophesied that the time will come when the work of the surgeon, necessary and vitally important as it is to-day, may be superseded by other methods. In certain quarters, there is a remarkably conservative tendency in cultivating remedial rather than radical surgery. And cases that even a few years ago were thought to require amputation or total extirpation are now being carefully conserved by other methods. It seems possible to lay aside the knife in many cases, and by means of suitable toxins or antitoxins, or other methods of treatment, to control inflammation, arrest suppuration and abort or disperse growths, for which it was once thought that the knife was the only cure.

This is a great surgeon's dream for the future. We know not whether it will be realized. But at present we owe an immense debt of gratitude to the relief that is experienced and the lives saved by the miracles of the surgeon's knife.

Would it not seem a miracle to one who, as I was told, by the touch of the surgeon's knife

was able to smell the apple blossoms for the first time and a whole new world was opened? Another who was born blind, at last after thirty years by a stroke of the magic knife opened his eyes on the beauty of the world; another had his speech brought to him; and still another, an invalid for years, dragging out a weary existence, was made over again and began to live again with health and zest. For these, surely, the surgeon's knife wrought miracles.

Some years ago, Professor William James, of Harvard, wrote a most interesting book called "The Varieties of Religious Experience," a study in human nature. In that book he gave a great deal of attention to what he called "once-born" and "twice-born" men. The "twice-born" men were those who in one way or another had gone through a spiritual experience of illumination or reformation or conversion, whatever the new decision, the radical change and the resultant life might be,—an experience equivalent to what might be called a new birth.

Professor James gave some classic instances of this, and discussed the subject philosophic-

ally and psychologically, until he finally proved his point; which is, that such a change can and does take place in human nature in numerous instances, and that such a change gives a new attitude to life.

More recently, in books which have made a great sensation within and without religious circles, a London student of human nature, Mr. Harold Begbie, has written on the subject of "Twice-Born Men; A Clinic in Regeneration," which he calls "a footnote in narrative to Professor James' greater volume," and in "Souls in Action" he continues the same great subject.

These books are a series of studies and a most interesting collection of actual stories of the work and effects of a new birth among the lowest class of society in the London slums, and of cases in a higher class of humanity in the West London Mission. They are brimming over with human interest. The narratives of the actual cases that are given are graphic, dramatic and intensely interesting. It is an argument by the logic of facts—convincing and irresistible facts. Possibly eighteen or twenty of these accounts of con-

version are given in very full detail. They are finely written. They are transcripts from real life. The books are well worth reading.

Now these transcripts from life remind us again of the great fact that there is a power, a miracle-working power, that can change vile human nature into something strong and noble. We need not despair of the most desperate case, even of the man or woman lowest down.

If there is any fact which is proved absolutely it is this fact that under the power of religion the drunkard can of a sudden lose all of his desire for alcohol; that a criminal who has spent the better part of his life in prison, may suddenly forsake his life of crime and become a decent respectable man; that the good-for-nothing thieving tramp may become an honest conscientious workman. These things are miracles in psychology; they are miracles in sociology; they are miracles in religion; but if they are miracles, they are also facts.

According to Professor James, to be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, are so many phrases

which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which one who is consciously wrong, inferior or unhappy, becomes consciously right, superior and happy in consequence of his firmer hold upon religious realities. We are not sure that this definition covers everything. It may be put in another way: "Conversion is the only means by which a radically bad person can be changed into a radically good person."

Conversion produces "not a change but a revolution in character. It does not alter, it creates a new personality. The phrase is not rhetorical, it corresponds to the experience and reality; they are conscious of being born again."

Now this deep and radically transforming experience of the heart is the only cure for the evils and iniquities of our modern life. As Mr. Begbie contends, no outward legislation can change the moral and inner life of people; no moral treatises can do it; no philanthropic devices, no political programs can change men radically bad into men radically good. We have hordes of outcasts and sinners; we have multitudes who are pronounced

hopeless and incurable in vice ; we have criminal classes.

Now, something may be done by associated charity, and by the enforcement of law, and by better environment. But the real work of making people radically wrong into people radically right can only be done by religion, and this, through the inner miracle of grace called conversion.

There are classic instances of radical conversion through all the centuries which have produced the saints, heroes and martyrs of faith. We have the story of St. Paul's conversion on the Damascus road, and the story of St. Augustine's conversion, a dramatic event in his history ; we have that sudden change of heart in the life of Francis of Assisi, which meant everything to him ; we have the story of Luther coming to the light in the midst of his traditional second-hand religious life,—the new breaking of the truth upon his soul came to him as he was climbing the Scala Sancta in Rome ; we have the story of John Wesley's conversion in the midst of a meeting of Moravians. These are all the stories of the awakening of men of noble family and large

intelligence. But the miracle was the same in their cases as it was in the case of John Bunyan the tinker, or the poor wretches snatched from the gutter by the workers of the Five Points Mission.

It is sometimes said in human surgery—"The case is too far gone, it is useless to attempt to do anything." But in spiritual surgery there is no case so desperate but what there is hope if we come to the Divine Helper. The picture was painted in the olden time, but it is still true: "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

There are some who have been living for years in deliberate sin; in whose life evil is festering like a cancer; whose better nature is being absorbed and lost by iniquity, and who are actually, as long as the disease of sin is growing in the life, drawing near to the gates of death, and the shadow of the doors of death eternal. There is only One who can snatch them from their fate; there is only One Divine Surgeon who can cut out the fatal sin of the life and restore them unto righteousness and eternal hope.

Yes, there are limitations to the human surgeon's work; limitations due both to the skill of the surgeon, the conditions under which he has to operate, and limitations due to the nature of the accident or disease. There are also at times circumstances beyond the control of either patient or surgeon. But in the divine surgery, there is One who has come to our help who has perfect knowledge of us and our needs, Who has perfect skill in healing the deepest distresses of our lives, and Who is all-powerful in using every divine means for our restoration. The only possible failure in the case will be our own will, our own hearts, our own desires. God will not force us into spiritual health. It must be voluntary desire and coöperation on our part. Nothing but our human wills can thwart God's loving purposes.

These days have seen a marvelous development in the use of the X-ray as a help to the diagnosis of disease and especially in ascertaining the location and extent of the fractures of bones, or the condition of internal organs, ordinarily invisible to the human eye. The X-ray enables the surgeon to see through intervening tissues and to make a photograph

which he may study at his leisure. It is a sort of uncanny process—this seeing beyond the range of human eyes, this looking through solid substances, but it is a most striking analogy of the eye of God which readeth us as an open book; He discovereth our hidden life; before whose piercing sight no secret can be hid.

The work of the Celestial Surgeon is to go deep. The truth of God is to search our inmost being and try the reins of our lives. The ancient Revelation is true: "The word of the Lord is powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

GOD'S GIFT OF ANESTHESIA

CHAPTER IV

GOD'S GIFT OF ANESTHESIA

ONE of the most wonderful prophecies in the Revelation of St. John is that there shall come a day when there shall be no more pain. These are the words: "Neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away." It seems a far-off vision. We can imagine it only for the immortal world. Yet there are some things here and now in this present world that seem to us prophecies of that which is to come. Among these present-day prophecies in actual life, none is more wonderful than the gift of anesthesia. We call it a gift rather than a discovery, and yet it is both,—a discovery of man, a gift of God.

One of the remarkable things about this gift of anesthesia which produces insensibility to pain, and seems like a blessed sleep of immunity from suffering, is that intimations of

it were given very early in the world's history, and yet were practically unheeded until the great truth in the fullness of time dawned upon the minds of men in this past nineteenth century.

Homer mentions the anesthetic effects of nepenthe and the waters of Lethe. Herodotus tells of the Scythian who inhaled the vapors of a certain kind of hemp to produce the same results. Pliny mentions the use of mandragora in surgery to relieve pain. This was also used extensively in the thirteenth century. The soporific effects of mandrake are alluded to by Shakespeare in the following quotation (in "Othello") where he says:

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep.

But the practice of anesthesia never became general, perhaps owing to its perils, and surgeons in the past appear to have regarded it with disfavor.

At the close of the eighteenth century, the brilliant discoveries of Dr. Joseph Priestley gave an impetus to chemical research. In

1800 Sir Humphry Davy, experimenting on nitrous oxide gas, discovered its anesthetic properties and suggested its employment in surgery. But for nearly half a century his suggestion remained unheeded. In 1818 Faraday showed that the inhalation of sulphuric ether produced similar effects to that of nitrous oxide gas. But these observations appear to have been regarded in the light of mere scientific curiosities. Others, such as Dr. Crawford W. Long, were making experiments in 1842.* Until suddenly in 1846,

* Concerning the discovery of anesthesia, the following claim is brought to my attention by Mr. A. B. Caldwell, of Atlanta, Ga.

Dr. Crawford W. Long, then living in the little town of Jefferson, after a series of experiments on himself and certain of his scholars, finally decided to make a great and final experiment on James M. Venerable, a student of that town who was troubled with two large tumors on the back of his neck. The first operation was performed successfully on March 30, 1842, one tumor being removed, and one month later the second one being successfully removed. Dr. Long did not attempt to make any financial profit out of his discovery, but gave it to the world for the benefit of humanity.

Horace Wells, of Hartford, Conn.; Dr. W. T.

the experiments of Dr. Morton and Dr. Warren of Boston brought to the attention of the world the discovery that anesthesia was a practical revolution for the relief of pain and suffering, and one of the greatest achievements in modern medicine and surgery.

Morton and Charles T. Jackson, of Boston; Drs. Warren, Haywood, and Bigelow, physicians in charge of the Massachusetts Hospital of Surgery, all made later attempts. Wells was a dentist, and his first effort was made in the dental chair on November 2, 1844, two years and six months after Long's discovery. Morton was also a dentist, and he manufactured what he called *letheon*, a preparation of sulphuric ether disguised with aromatic oils. Drs. Warren, Haywood, and Bigelow consented to try *letheon* in an operating case, and asked Morton to administer ether, which was done on September 30, 1846, more than four years after Long's experiment at Jefferson. Dr. Bigelow published an account of the operation in the official organ, and as this was the first formal announcement they claimed to discover it, which was later on disproved.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes suggested the new name of anesthesia, and to him belongs the honor of furnishing the name.

Dr. Jackson, above referred to, claims to have given the idea to Morton. He and Morton quarreled, and crossing the Atlantic, Jackson

This was an epoch-making discovery. As Dr. W. W. Keen describes it:* "The news went like wildfire, and anesthesia was soon introduced into every clinic and almost every operation throughout the civilized world. Prior to that time a surgical operation was attended with horrors which those who live in these days cannot appreciate. Then, the best surgeon was one who could perform an operation in the least possible time. The whole object of new methods of operating was to shorten the period of frightful suffer-

set up his claim in England to being the first discoverer.

Long disdained to seek any financial recompense, but in the interest of truth the matter was presented by Senator William C. Dawson on the floor of the United States Senate.

Jackson finally came to Georgia in 1854, and after going over the matter with Long, admitted, in the presence of Hon. C. W. Anderson, that Long was undoubtedly the first man to use ether as an anesthetic in surgical operations, and was candid enough to publish this avowal in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* of April 11, 1861.

* Addresses and Other Papers, by W. W. Keen, M.D. Philadelphia: W. D. Saunders & Co., p. 325.

ing which every patient had to endure. Every second of suffering saved was an incalculable boon. To submit to any operation required therefore a heroism and an endurance which are almost incomprehensible to us now. All of the more modern delicate, deliberate, careful, painstaking operations involving minute dissection amid nerves and blood-vessels, when life or death depends on the accuracy of almost every touch of the knife, were absolutely impossible. It was beyond human endurance quietly to submit one's self for an hour, for an hour and a half, for two hours or longer to such physical agony."

But the gift of anesthesia changed all this. People were now willing to submit to needful operations when they knew that they would be oblivious to pain. A striking fact in the new era is shown by the figures of the Massachusetts General Hospital. Before the introduction of anesthesia, only thirty-seven operations a year for the preceding five years are recorded. In the five years succeeding the new discovery a hundred operations annually were performed. The rate of confidence has gone on increasing, until in a recent year, in this

one hospital over thirty-seven hundred operations were performed. To-day as many as twenty operations in a single day are performed, and some active surgeons have a record of as many as four or five hundred operations a year. The year 1846 is therefore an epoch-making year. The following year witnessed the introduction of chloroform by Sir James Y. Simpson, of Edinburgh, which has also been one of the most efficacious and useful of all the anesthetic agents. Still later, other agents have been discovered for producing local anesthesia,—that is, which destroy the sensibility of the part of the body to be operated on, while not producing unconsciousness. Freezing the part by ice and salt, and by a quickly evaporating spray of chloride of ethyl, are sometimes used. But cocaine and other similar substances have of late been extensively used after their harmlessness has been first shown by experiments on animals. It is also possible, by certain methods of recent days, to produce a large degree of anesthesia of the body without loss of consciousness; whether this is desirable in most cases is another question. What the twentieth

century wants is merely the further development of the gift of anesthesia by methods which shall be perfectly safe and efficient.

Those of us who have submitted to the process of anesthesia know something of its strange and unearthly sensations. To some, the coming of this artificial sleep seems like the floating away into space with the sound of distant thunder in the ears, the surging and rolling of waters, and the coming of great visions; at length, in this strange but not altogether unpleasant and most unusual experience, consciousness is lost, until the time of the awakening comes and slowly the present world is again realized. The vapors inhaled act upon the brain and the sensory nerves. They give the feeling of exhilaration and at last a profound sleep and absolute unconsciousness. For most people, there is no discomfort or horrors connected with it; it is merely a wonderful experience.

Some of you will remember the hospital scene described in that most touching book "Rab and His Friends," by the gifted and well-beloved physician, Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh. It is one of the most beautifully

touching stories in literature. But it is a story of the old days, when there was no anesthetic, when an operation was a rare event, that needed heroic fortitude to endure its dreadful pangs. Now, as one surgeon says: "Thanks to the blessed sleep of anesthesia, sufferers from even the most dreadful disorders can have long and difficult operations done, accurate and tedious dissections made, and yet feel not a twinge of pain."

Now what are the suggestions for the spiritual life that come from this subject of anesthesia? Before we look at some true spiritual anesthesia, let us glance in passing at some false forms of anesthesia. There are false anodynes which men use in life to deaden the pains of sin or sorrow and to quiet conscience within them, and to forget their obligations to divine and eternal things. It may be that they resort to the false anodyne of dissipation to drown their sorrows; it may be that they seek to deaden the stings of conscience by a constant and absorbing round of pleasure. It may be that they aim to smother the divine voice that calls to them by indifference to religious things and by indifference to the de-

mands of God. They cry—"Peace, peace, when there is no peace" down deep in their souls. They are soothing themselves with falsehoods or indulging in futile hopes. They slumber on, lulled by the traitorous anesthesia of their own selfish imaginings, while at the very time sure retribution is coming upon them in the certain realization that they are wasting and abusing their God-given powers and are thrusting themselves out of the heaven of His love.

But on the other hand, there are some true and noble forms of spiritual anesthesia. There are ways in which pain can be conquered and forgotten, while at the same time the life is being made over into new health and strength. We must recollect that anesthesia is not a surgical process, not the process of cutting or operating, but only an accompaniment of surgical work, a process of making the conditions possible for the relief of suffering, and of extending the time for successful surgical work. In the spiritual life there are certain means of conquest possible by which the ordinary sufferings of life may be relieved, and in which a greater strength at the same time develops.

Spiritual anesthesia is the process, more or less complete, of happy oblivion from pain and anguish. The first spiritual process by which these same ends are obtained in the life, is by the gift of a supreme trust in God. When men have been absolutely absorbed by the thought of God, when they have felt that they were doing God's will, when they have felt that they were absolutely in God's hands, they have been able to brave all dangers and defy all pain, and be oblivious of things which ordinarily cause men to cry out or break down. But under the overmastering passion of faith in God thousands and tens of thousands have defied the sword and the attacks of savage beasts in the Roman arenas in the days of the early martyrs. They have been conscious only of God, even as the flames of the fagots were curling up around their bodies. Like St. Paul, they have been able to rejoice in calamities, and to be brave in tribulations, yea, even glad that they could bear testimony to the sustaining power of God in these ways.

The Epistle to the Hebrews recites an inspiring list of these wonderful heroes of faith who "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, quenched the violence of fire, out of

weakness were made strong; some were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned; they were sawn asunder; were tempted, were slain with the sword. They were destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy." And yet for the joy that was set before them, they endured these things worthily; they despised the world, and they are with that triumphant company at the right hand of God.

Now we do not say that in all cases a supreme and overmastering faith in God will produce oblivion to the pains and suffering of life; but we do know that in many cases it has been the means of perfect triumph, and in all cases the pains and trials of life are infinitely harder to bear without this supreme trust in God. When we feel that the calamities of life are a part of the Father's will for us, when we can accept these as from His hands, the secret but sure blessings of His infinite wisdom and His infinite love, then surely such faith and assurance nerve us to new life, and make

the calamities seem trifling, in comparison with what otherwise they would be. A supreme trust in God is the magical power in life that can transform sorrows into joys and calamities into blessings. A supreme faith in God is the magical power that can change the chamber of suffering into an anteroom of Heaven, full of the divine Presence, and with glimmerings of the divine glory. A supreme trust in God is the magical power that can change a poor weak sufferer into a noble hero of God. He realizes the words: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

A real spiritual anesthesia for the relief of suffering, while the perfecting of the life is going on, is also to be found in that spiritual process known as forgiveness. Each of us knows by a real experience that some of the bitterest pains of life are not the physical ones but the mental distress,—the presence in the life, of the spirit of sin; of the sullen and rebellious nature, the bitter and ugly moods engendered; the venom which is created in the inner life, the bitterness of unforgiven sin and its remorse; the bitings of conscience; the

utter sense of shame, the horror of the consequences which we know must follow from persistent and unrepented sin. These things are what often engender the distress of soul and the agony of heart. These are the haunting phantoms even at the festive banquet of life, which like Banquo's ghost will not down. These are the roots of bitterness, which are felt at certain times in the life even when other circumstances seem prosperous and happy. Sometimes the life on the surface is most serene; but down deep there is storm and tempest of the soul. Sometimes the outward life makes a fair showing in the flesh, but inwardly there are ravaging wolves; sometimes the structure of the life seems to outward eyes to be splendidly built, but within there are weakness and corruption. The soul is never at peace that lives in sin. Now the only relief from the pains of sin in the soul and the only hope for a distressed conscience are in the anesthesia of God's pardoning love. Nothing but His forgiveness can wipe away the stains of sin and heal the scars of sin, and cast into utter oblivion the whole foul record of the life of sin. The miracle of forgiveness is

not merely that it wipes away the account of the special sin, but that it has the wonderful power of redeeming and transforming the sinful spirit, and of rooting out the desire to sin. Its work is radical and goes deep. It is a part of the process of forming a new creature, of re-creating the whole life into spiritual sanity and health.

Now such a process is distinctly the process of producing a most happy oblivion of the past. Nothing that can be done in human life can so help to blot out the bitter remembrances of past sin as the assurance of God's full and free pardon. It cannot restore pristine innocence, but it can bring something perhaps better, a maturer purity that has conquered and shall conquer through the grace of God. And most wonderful of all, this gift of the spiritual anesthesia of forgiveness draws the absolute veil of oblivion over our sins, even before the eyes of God. The Scriptures represent Him as saying: "I will remember thy sins no more against you; they shall be cast into the sea"—the unfathomable sea, even of the divine forgetfulness. It seems almost too wonderful to be believed; that all remembrance

of our iniquities, when forgiven, are expunged absolutely from the divine mind, and yet it is the positive assurance of the Word. No more shall they be brought up in judgment against us, even at the final great assize; they are forgiven; they are forgotten; they are no more.

There is another form of spiritual anesthesia—the anesthesia of time. The passing of time in many cases is a divine means of deadening and soothing the keenness of pain and sorrow. Time is a heavenly minister of comfort. Sometimes we do not like to think that we shall ever forget the sorrows that we endure. But the fact, the blessed fact, is that we can forget the keenness of sorrow and retain only the sweetness of the memories. Time is certainly an anodyne whose spiritual service to humanity is one of the blessed gifts of God.

There is also the anesthesia of old age, often full of God's blessing in the calmness and serenity which it brings and its oblivion to the keener pains of life. Sometimes these ripest years are fragrant with the memories of the earlier times, and only the

pleasant remembrances and thoughts remain. Old age is therefore one of the anesthetics of the pains of life.

But the chief and final anesthesia of life is one which is often the climax to the whole life. It is Christian death, which is no longer regarded as something to be dreaded and feared, but something which is, after all, one of God's greatest gifts; the gift of oblivion to the pains and sufferings and sorrows of this life, and the entrance into another life, of new health, of new strength, of new joy.

There is a beautiful word of the Psalmist which we love to quote and which brings differing meanings to different souls, those words in the 127th Psalm, "He giveth His beloved sleep." Some of us love to think of these words most literally, as referring to the gift of natural sleep; and this meaning is full of reasonable comfort to our hearts; the gift of sleep, of natural sleep, is often a blessed boon from God. In times of weariness, pain and sorrow, how much the gift of sleep may mean to us. We sympathize with Coleridge's words in *The Ancient Mariner*:

O sleep it is a blessed thing
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary, Queen, the praise be given;
She sent the blessed sleep from heaven
That slid into my soul.

We love to quote those words of Shakespeare:

Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care
Sore labor's bath, balm of hurt minds
Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep.

Sleep is oftentimes the best tonic, the very medicine needed for the tired nerves, as strengthening as food and drink; and therefore when sleep is wooed under such circumstances and at last comes, we can devoutly say, God giveth us this boon of sleep.

There is another interpretation to these words of the Psalmist which the Revised Version suggests: "He giveth to His beloved in their sleep." In the olden days the divine revelations were sometimes given in dreams and trances. The Bible has many accounts of those who were divinely guided by their dreams. And some of the noblest teaching of the world has even in later centuries, like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, been given under

the similitude of a dream. True is it for most of us, even to-day, that if we recognize God's present guidance as being in the paths of our finest intuitions and clearest judgments, we must also say that these are oftentimes wonderfully illumined and clarified by a night's rest, and the gift of sleep. God gives us untold blessings of insight and foresight in a better, wider wisdom of life, when after His blessing of sleep we come into the clearness of the unprejudiced daylight. All of us have had the experience at times of having some of our hardest problems solve themselves while we slept. Sometimes we call it unconscious cerebration. But after all, whatever and however it is, is it not all the gift of God?

But still a third meaning is often given to the beautiful words of the Psalmist, "He giveth His beloved sleep." And this meaning is the one which by the consent of the Christian centuries, has given the profoundest and most far-reaching meaning to these words. It is only possible through the gift of the contagious vision of Christ, to see death as a beautiful sleep from which the awakening is full of gladness and beauty.

Some of you remember Mrs. Browning's poem:

If all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,—
Now tell me if there any is
For gift or grace surpassing this,
He giveth His beloved sleep.

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes say,
But have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep;
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
He giveth His beloved sleep.

God's dew drops mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap,—
More softly than the dew is shed
Or cloud is floated overhead,
He giveth His beloved sleep.

How many have devoutly prayed for the gift of death; and in many cases it is God's final and best gift,—a real release from suffering, and an anodyne from all pain,—an anesthesia for the sorrows of life; and to every heart that loves God, death means but a sleep from which we shall awaken refreshed and

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rejuvenated. Just as the physical sleep restores the body, so this final sleep of death restores the soul. We bathe anew in the divine life and awaken to immortal strength and vigor, a higher and a more glorious life.

THE ANTISEPTIC LIFE

CHAPTER V

THE ANTISEPTIC LIFE

IN modern surgery, as most of us are aware, the two great discoveries, anesthesia and antisepsis, have been epoch-making, and have entirely revolutionized methods of work and the possibilities of success. They have made practical and safe many methods of surgical treatment which heretofore, by reason of their duration, pain, and danger, were almost impossible. More than this, they have effected the saving of so much suffering in the human race, and they have preserved so many human lives that otherwise would have been lost, that it is impossible to translate into figures or phrases the greatness of the work that has been done for humanity by the miracles of the surgeon's knife under these new conditions.

What is meant by antisepsis, or the antiseptic treatment, to put it in the briefest way,

is the protecting of the parts which are exposed by the cutting of the surgeon's knife from possible infection due to the presence of dangerous germs. Now in order to realize something of what this means and the possibilities of peril, when such precautions are not taken, we may devote a few words to the nature of these germs and the course of their work.

It was as late as 1863 that the first disease-breeding germs or bacteria, as they were named, were discovered. This name bacteria is now the general designation for all forms of germs, although they differ much in shape. It was not until 1881 that the cause of inflammation and suppuration, that is, the formation of pus or matter in wounds, was discovered to be the result of infection by bacteria. A little later Professor Koch, of Berlin, discovered the cause of tuberculosis, a little rodlike body which is called the bacillus of tuberculosis. Still later the bacillus of erysipelas, and of tetanus or lockjaw, were discovered, and still others more recently.

Bacteria are now divided into two principal classes, according to their shape. One

class is known as cocci, which are in shape like little balls; some of these occur in bunches like grapes; others arrange themselves in chains like beads. These last are very much more virulent and dangerous. The second class, those known as bacilli, are in shape like a lead pencil, and examples of these are the bacilli of tuberculosis and of lockjaw. The bacillus of tuberculosis is capable of infecting not merely the lungs, although that is the most fertile field of its thriving, but also it may infect and waste the tissues of the bowels, the bones, the joints, the vertebræ of the spine, the brain, the glands and even the skin.

It must be remembered, however, that there are an enormous number of bacteria that are not dangerous. Some of them are entirely harmless even if introduced into the human body. All these bacteria are plants and not, as is frequently supposed, low forms of animal life. The effect of bacteria on the system has been learned by careful experiment. It requires about a thousand of the bacilli of lockjaw to produce death. On the other hand, some bacilli require more than eighteen

millions to produce any effect whatever. And in the case of certain others it requires over a billion to produce death. The grave danger is in the rapidity of growth when introduced into the system. A single germ, if given plenty of food and plenty of room, can multiply itself so rapidly that in three days under favoring conditions it can produce millions of its fellows. Moreover, the effect of these bacteria on different tissues and different persons varies very much. A healthy tissue, ordinarily protected as Nature protects it, can resist an invasion of bacteria. A healthy person in most cases seems to be immune from the majority of dangerous germs. It is only when the system is run down and capable of little resistance, or when the tissues are cut or torn, that the results may become very dangerous.

Now the introduction of anesthesia did not rid surgery of all terrors. It is true that it relieved the pain of the actual operation; but the after-effects were still full of suffering, and often great danger. Recovery was a most uncertain process, and it was pathetic to see the parched lips of the poor sufferer, who

tossed uneasily during sleepless nights, the wounds often in frightful condition from inflammation and suppuration, and the patients dying by scores from blood poisoning, or erysipelas, tetanus, or gangrene. These after-diseases used to be the constant attendant of every surgeon. They were the dreaded guests at every operation. It was a rare case in those olden days, even after the introduction of anesthesia, when an operation was not followed by fever, suppuration, suffering and considerable danger. To do the abdominal or chest surgery of the present day in those old days would have been equivalent to signing the death-warrant of the patient. The mortality was sixty per cent., or over. It was a real godsend, therefore, when there arose those deliverers of the human race whose names can never be forgotten and whose fame will last as long as time shall endure. Such men as Jenner, Warren, and Lister form a triumvirate of glorious names in the history of the healing art. And they all sprang from sturdy Anglo-Saxon loins. To be sure there had been previous experiments and exhaustive laboratory work by such scientists as Liebig

and Pasteur, but it was reserved for Sir Joseph Lister, the eminent English scientist, whose name we use daily in that household article "listerine," to make practical and certain the largest possibilities of the antiseptic treatment in surgical work. He showed experimentally how by absolute surgical cleanliness, all infection from dangerous germs could be avoided. And so he actually banished from our hospitals the dangers of blood poisoning and gangrene, and brought life and health to multitudes who would otherwise have perished from operations which are now perfectly safe.

There is large contrast between the old methods of surgery, for instance what was done at the time of the Civil War, and the antiseptic methods that are now used by every good surgeon. Between the two methods exists a gulf of difference. The old method had only an ordinary cleaning of the instruments, the sponges and other apparatus, and the surgeon himself was particular only as to ordinary cleanliness. The instruments were often laid on the patient's clothing, a sponge if dropped was picked up from the floor and

used with innocent equanimity, and other things were done in those days which would be considered suicidal to-day. It was always assumed that there would be fever or other disturbances as after-effects, and usually some serious complication that had to be met. To-day the most careful preparations are made to insure surgical cleanliness. Nail brushes, soap and water, antiseptic solutions, antiseptic dressings are absolutely necessary. The instruments are carefully boiled, and kept in a tray with antiseptic solutions. The greatest care is exercised in every way. So perfect is the surgical cleanliness in a well-regulated hospital in these days that infection from germs is a very rare occurrence. Usually there is no fever at all, and usually no supuration. There is little pain experienced, and by the fifth or tenth day the wound is well. By these methods of modern surgery, mortality has been marvelously reduced, from over sixty per cent., or in some classes of operations running as high as seventy-five per cent., to three and four per cent., and in many cases almost zero.

We say therefore that the discoverers and

developers of the antiseptic treatment are among the great benefactors of mankind. And their names are to be held in most grateful remembrance. If Lecky could say in his "History of European Morals": "It is probable that the American inventor of the first anesthetic has done more for the real happiness of mankind, than all the moral philosophers," we may also say as we look at the vastness and incalculable benefit of their work, that the discoverers of the antiseptic treatment are also to be numbered among the greatest benefactors of the race.

Now what are the spiritual analogies that come to us naturally from the subject of the antiseptic treatment? This whole subject is full of very distinct spiritual suggestions. Oftentimes when we read over the ancient Psalms, and find those phrases about "the enemies" that are constantly surrounding us, and the "foes that come upon us and eat up our flesh," we cannot see the actual similitude, for we do not realize ourselves in the midst of those who hate us, and are seeking our destruction. But when we do remember that in all the air about us there are invisible

enemies, in the countless multitudes of dangerous bacteria, we are assured after all that we have our multitudes of enemies. In the same way in spiritual matters, whether or not there are distinct evil personalities that are seeking our destruction continually, yet we all know that there are myriads of subtle evil influences in daily life and in the world about us against which we must rigorously guard ourselves, and it is only eternal vigilance that is the price of liberty.

Some of these evil influences are the temptations innumerable to give ourselves up to things selfish, unworthy and ignoble. The temptation to spend all our time and strength on the things that perish with the using, and to forget and neglect to lay hold on eternal life. The temptation to waste our God-given powers thoughtlessly and carelessly and prodigally. The temptation to drift with the multitude without following the personal voice of conscience, to which alone we ought to give heed. The temptation to estimate all things by their money value. The temptation to fill the heart with the pomp and the pride

of life and thus to smother the divine fire within us, and to blot out all divine vision.

There are many temptations which come in more crude ways than these, as the sordid temptations to greed and dissipation and licentiousness which under the name of business or of social life or pleasure or sowing wild oats beguile many a life into its pitiable tragedy. There are oftentimes distinct perils in association with individuals who are impure in thought and evil in words and of doubtful habits. A man is known by the friends that he makes, and their influence for good or evil upon his life is most potent. The whole subject of influence is a most subtle one, and the power of sin is most insidious. Well therefore may their action, so invisible, so illusive, and yet so inevitable, be compared to the action of the hidden bacteria of the air.

Therefore the question comes most pertinently to us: How can we protect our lives against these dangerous influences of evil? How can we guard ourselves thoroughly from the bacteria of sin?

There are at least three ways that we may suggest as being the methods which are plainly

emphasized in the Scriptures, and which have been tested and proved efficient by the triumphant experiences of many lives.

The first method of applying the antiseptic treatment for the protection of our spiritual life is this: Set a steadfast face against sin, and fear nothing but God. The testimony has been very often borne that it is those who are always afraid of "catching diseases," as the phrase goes, who are constantly falling victims to them. Fear seems the very condition which devitalizes one's strength and powers, and opens an easy way of attack.

It is those who trust life and go ahead,—who do not worry over these things, but do the duty that lies nearest bravely and confidently, who are usually immune. Many people are able to go in and nurse contagious diseases without extra precaution, if they have the one condition of not being afraid. A fearless soul is a splendid antiseptic. As with material things, so with spiritual. God wants us to be confident in Him. He never leads us into temptation. But if duty calls, even into places where sin is rampant, we can trust God and do our duty. At the time of

plague and pestilence, if it is a duty for one to remain at his post, let him trust God and do it. And if God sees best He will certainly preserve him. The Bible is full of appeals and commands to this fearless life. "Be not fearful but believing." "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." That whole ninety-first Psalm is a great trumpet blast of confidence for one who would war against the forces of evil. You remember such phrases, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,"—for a great many people the "terror by night" is that fiction, the unwholesome miasms and the floating dangers of the night air; for others it may be the terror of insomnia. "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night nor for the arrow that flieth by day,"—perhaps sun-stroke or the shock of paralysis or the things that never happen. "Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday." In a spiritual sense these are all pictures of the evil influences that are at work day and night. But the Psalm goes on to say: "There shall no evil befall thee; neither shall any plague come nigh

thy dwelling. For He giveth His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Can we believe this? Do we believe this? Have we conquered our fears? Do we trust God? And are we going forward bravely? Then are we in great part immune against the bacteria of evil and of sin.

A further way in which the antiseptic treatment becomes applicable to the spiritual life is by the injunction, "Keep up your strength." It is a well-known fact in medical life, that a person in splendid physical health is practically immune from the attacks of bacteria. It is only when the physical system is run down that the individual lays himself open to attack. It is only when his physical vitality is below par that the bacteria become dangerous foes. It is the same way in spiritual matters. A Christian is practically immune so long as he keeps his spiritual life in good condition. It is only when he falls below par in spiritual things, that he lays himself open to attack. The old phrase runs: "The Christian's doubt is the Devil's opportunity."

When we neglect prayer and the reading of God's word, when we neglect the services of

the sanctuary, it is either an indication that our spiritual life is below par or very soon will be.

For these things—prayer and worship—are the fresh air and food of the spiritual life, that help to maintain the spiritual strength. But besides fresh air and food for the spiritual life, we need also spiritual exercise, in order to preserve and maintain the best spiritual health. Faith and works must go together. Spiritual worship and spiritual action must be manifest in the most practical ways. A man who tries to live the spiritual life by devotional acts toward God and does not do anything for his fellow-men in the way of sincere and practical helpfulness to others soon finds himself with only a flabby Christianity without sufficient stamina and vitality to resist the attacks of spiritual disease.

There are too many "low-vitality" Christians in this world. We need in our Christianity more red corpuscles, a vigorous and rigorous and red-blooded manhood. When a man honestly attends to these things, and keeps his spiritual life at par or above par, he is living an antiseptic life, practically immune

from the subtle and invisible enemies that are all about him. The Scripture injunction is, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

Now a still further suggestion by way of analogy from the antiseptic treatment is this command for the spiritual life: "Live a clean life, through and through." The chief requisite in the antiseptic treatment in hospital work is absolute surgical cleanness. If the surgeon is scrupulously particular that everything that comes in contact with the patient is surgically clean and free from germs, there is practically no danger of infection. In spiritual ways it is also the foremost and the essential requirement for an antiseptic life that there shall be cleanness of heart, for the heart is the centre and source of all the outgoings of the life. The Psalmist of old said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," and the Master himself said at a later age, "It is not what goeth into a man that defileth him, but it is out of the heart of man that there proceedeth hatred, angers, murders and all uncleanness." It is the heart of the life,

therefore, that demands our supreme attention. If that fountain head be contaminated, the streams of the whole life will be wrong. The prayer of old needs to be in every one of our hearts and lives, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Now our divine Master came for this very purpose. He was the Great Physician of the soul. He knew how to deal with the human heart, He aimed by His divine methods to purify and renew the whole being. His purpose was what we sometimes call a radical work of grace. It was to reach to the inmost life, to the very springs of being, and then from that to extend to every part of our outward life in all its practical manifestations. It was to purify and transform the very spirit of the mind, the ambitions of the life, the speech of the lips, the look of the eyes, the touch of the hand, and the direction of the feet.

The whole work of Christ was to fill our hearts with the exquisite joy of cleanness, to inspire in our lives a very passion for purity and righteousness.

Such a life purified and renewed is emphatically immune, a life antiseptic to sin and evil. The heart-purity means life-strength. Such was the strength of Sir Galahad as Tennyson portrays him:

His strength was as the strength of ten
Because his heart was pure.

There is a false notion in some quarters that the strong life is only the life that is rough and swaggering, that has mixed with the elements, that has been stained and scarred by the coarse sins of life. But the highest testimony of the ages has shown us that this is not so. The strongest characters that this world has known were men who have been lion-hearted, large-brained, and who have done valiant and worthiest work in the world, and at the same time been pure-hearted, fine-souled, clean and noble in all their life and ambitions. What I mean is such men as King Alfred of England; and King Robert the Bruce of Scotland; Richard the Lion-hearted—men of prowess and deeds and yet against whose personal life there is no breath of evil. Men in these modern days like General Gor-

don of Khartoum; or David Livingstone, the explorer and Christian hero; or William E. Gladstone, Prime Minister of England; or in our own country, such men as George Washington, and Emerson, and Longfellow and Phillips Brooks. Strength *never* presupposes impurity. Indeed, the foundation for the finest and noblest strength is absolute cleanness of heart and life.

Others have recognized the truth of what we are trying to emphasize. James Russell Lowell, in his book called "My Study Windows," exclaims: "What an antiseptic is a pure life!" And I remember a remark of Dr. Maltbie Babcock's. He said: "In regard to certain amusements and habits, I can't indulge in them. I am determined to keep my life antiseptic."

There is often a morbid curiosity which is unduly eager to sound the gamut of human experiences, even by ways that are illicit. There is oftentimes an audacious willingness to tamper with sin, for the sake of the risks involved. It is a dangerous business. It is like voluntarily seeking temptation, or entering into the midst of a plague spot where

no duty but merely an insane inclination carries one. We may remember those well-known but nevertheless true words:

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
That to be hated, needs but to be seen.
Yet seen too oft, familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

We may regard it therefore a common-sense sanitary measure to keep our own thoughts from harboring impure and ignoble conceptions. It is an absolute hygienic duty to prevent the staining and scarring of the subtlest tissues of our memory by foul visions. That wise physician, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, tells how some men would give anything in the world if they could only rid their memories of the haunting ghosts of evil, which are continually distressing their lives; nor are these things, he continues, "merely shadowy and illusionary, they contaminate and corrupt the infinitely delicate tissues of the soul. There are books which are the subtlest form of poison; there are dramatic plays that are unspeakably injurious to morals. There are places and associations that are as infectious an evil as a plague spot full of Asiatic chol-

era." It is not a weakness nor prudery to avoid such things; it is only common sense and hygienic precaution. God emphasizes these things in His Word to awaken us to the tremendous peril in them, and therefore His commands thunder forth, "Keep thyself pure, keep thy body under"; "Keep thyself from evil"; "Hast thou resisted unto blood, striving against sin?"

CERTAIN LIFE-OR-DEATH MATTERS

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CHAPTER VI

CERTAIN LIFE-OR-DEATH MATTERS

THE word "prophylaxis" which has come into general use in these days has long been a medical and surgical term. It means literally, the process of guarding against. There is, for instance, the prophylaxis of the social evil,—the ways and means which must be adopted to root out that cancer from the social body. But there may be prophylaxis of any disease,—that is, safeguards, precautionary means; and such are the very wisest kind of medicine and surgery. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." It is the absolute duty of the state to adopt such means for the public safety as will prevent as far as possible accidents to life or limb, and all conditions that would breed disease. It is equally incumbent upon every individual to look out for his own safety, to take no unnecessary risks, to run

into no foolhardy dangers, but also to guard himself from accident and disease by every sensible and sanitary precaution.

Accidents and disease are not punishments divinely sent. They are the result of ignorance or carelessness. About a hundred years ago the cholera invaded Edinburgh and the people of that day thought that it was a visitation from God. The Presbytery of Edinburgh issued a call for a day of humiliation and fasting and prayer, but Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, issued a letter telling the Presbytery that it was more important for the people to clean the streets and dirty back-yards of the city and to cleanse the filthy slums than it was to fast and pray. The same thing is occurring to-day in Oriental lands. The pestilences have been long regarded merely as visitations of the divine displeasure, but the Christian medical missionaries are showing that the plague can only be got rid of by cleaning up the cities and by establishing quarantines and other precautions.

In the same way we must recognize that it is our duty to look into the sources of our milk supply; to see to the purity of the water

that we drink; to inspect our drainage from time to time. These are a real part of the prophylaxis of disease.

It is equally our duty as wise citizens to look after the conditions in the mining communities and see to it that the mines are not death-traps; to see that factories have proper laws for the protection of their employees from accident; to see that apartment houses and public buildings have fire-escapes, and proper means of exit; that railroads should take all possible means to reduce their frightful records of accident and death; that even our patriotic holiday, the Fourth of July, should be so safeguarded in its celebration that it should not result in thousands of cases of lockjaw and death.

Now all of these matters may be neglected and are constantly neglected in some quarters and a pitiable record of consequences ensues. Neglect through ignorance is pathetic enough and we see the horror of the results; but more terrible is the neglect through carelessness and recklessness. Yet this also is an everyday occurrence.

There are three serious kinds of neglect that

are oftentimes matters of life or death in surgical work; and the first one is this, the undermining of the strength of the system through dissipation or indulgence. Often you have heard the doctor say of a certain case, "He has everything in his favor because he has lived the right sort of life, and his physical system is in good condition; he can stand this operation all right, for he hasn't weakened himself by bad habits." But on the other hand in other conditions the case may be put thus: "I'm afraid it will be hard for him to pull through, he is in such bad condition. It is a complicated case, he is so run down by his habits; his tissues are so weakened that I fear he cannot withstand the shock of the operation." It is a well-known fact that a man of good habits and steady life has three times the chance of recovery that one has who indulges bad habits and leads a dissipated life.

Now it is the same thing in a spiritual way. It is easier to become a Christian when one has had good parentage, good home training and has lived good habits of life. It is the most difficult thing in the world for one who

has let his life run into low thought and evil habits to be saved; and yet it can be done and there are no limits to the possibility of the power of God. Human strength soon reaches its limitations and human recovery is oftentimes most doubtful; but with God nothing is impossible and even man's extremity is God's opportunity.

Another matter of life and death in surgical cases is the time element,—the case may be brought too late to the attention of the surgeon. It might have been a matter of easy treatment and of sure cure if it had been taken in time at the first appearance of the trouble; but now it has been allowed to go so long and it has gotten such a hold on the system that other tissues are involved and other organs complicated with the case. The delay has been a fatal one. The operation may be performed but the chances are that the results will be very doubtful.

This situation has also its spiritual analogy. The life of sin may be allowed to go on too long in its evil course. The spirit of sin may become an organized part of the nature and the whole life may be involved in pitiable

tragedy. A sin which could easily have been uprooted at the start has been allowed to grow until it has corrupted the whole nature, or it may be that that sin is allowed to grow and become so dominant in the life that even will-power seems to be vitiated, and is no longer capable of making decisions or carrying them out. We often hear the comment, "His will is so weak." In many cases is not this very weakness of will the result of indulgence in sin, until the will itself seems to be paralyzed? It is an awful condition to find in the moral life. Is the point ever reached when it is absolutely too late? When the case is beyond spiritual help? God's Word says "No." While there is life there is hope. There is no case so bad but what it can be redeemed, and the testimony of those who work for the saving of the lowest classes show that men can even be taken out of the gutter and made into new men who are a power in the salvation of many other lives. We see then that while there is analogy between surgical and spiritual in this thing, yet there is also this difference. We need never give up hope in spiritual matters. No matter how desperate

the case, there is still a chance of recovery. Through the infinite and almighty grace of God, even the dying thief was converted and received the promise: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

There is another matter of life and death, and that is this: many surgical cases are lost because the patient has been using palliative means and has refused to let a radical and thorough work be done. For instance, salves and ointments or bottles of quack medicine are used where something radical is needed to reach the seat of the trouble. Every means of relief is tried except the one thing needful, which is consultation with a good physician or surgeon, and his thorough treatment.

This condition in a physical case suggests a like peril in the spiritual case. People try to be saved in various ways,—by their respectability, by their good works, by their generous gifts, without giving their heart to God; or they expect to be cured of their sins by some strange process or easy method of forgetting their sins,—by covering up their sins; by treating their sins lightly; by denying sin; by smother-

ing their conscience ; by cultivating the stoical mood ; but such things can never get rid of the disease of sin. The only way is by a real repentance and the radical work of God's grace in the heart. Some even think to cure the desperate case of their life by seeking out strange doctrine in a subtle, far-off philosophy unfolded from the savants of the East, or manufactured by some ingenious philosopher of the West. But these are of little use. They are only palliative. They may soothe the soul for a little while, but they cannot effect the cure. There is only one infallible remedy for the effectual cure of sin, and that is the old Gospel of God's love.

Long ago, after the commandments were given from Sinai, Moses gathered the multitude of people together and read unto them the laws of God, and he spoke unto them : "If ye follow these laws of God, they shall be blessings unto you, and if ye disobey them, they shall be as curses unto you." Then he added : "Behold I have set before you this day life and death ; therefore choose life." In the same way these things that we have considered are most serious matters involving

eternal issues. They are matters of life and death. It depends upon you, what shall be the issue. "Behold I have set before you this day life and death; therefore choose life."

